



August 17, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary, United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The Baltimore Development Corporation (BDC) strongly endorses the application being made by the Baltimore Department of Transportation (Baltimore DOT) for a TIGER II Discretionary Grant in support of the Westport Waterfront Transit-Oriented Development (Westport Waterfront TOD). This grant will catalyze the creation of a multi-modal network of highway, road, light rail, bicycle and pedestrian improvements necessary to redevelop a 50-acre brownfield in a highly distressed area of Baltimore City.

BDC is the lead agency working to promote economic development in the Baltimore region. In accordance with the City's 2008 *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*, we have made Westport Waterfront TOD our top priority for implementation due to the significant impact this project will have on Baltimore's regional competitiveness. The Westport Waterfront TOD represents the kind of place-based investment that will unlock the redevelopment potential of the 275-acre Middle Branch development district and provide tremendous employment opportunities for disadvantaged and underserved residents.

In 2008, BDC, working with the City's Finance Department, secured Mayor and City Council approval of three Tax Increment Financing (TIF) ordinances affording Baltimore City the legal authority to issue bonds for Westport Waterfront TOD infrastructure construction. Due to turmoil in the municipal bond market, the TIF bond issuance has been delayed. The TIGER II grant is needed to reduce the size of the TIF bond issuance, thereby creating more marketable and saleable bonds. Within 120 days of being awarded the requested TIGER II funds, BDC will issue the first tranche of TIF bonds, the sale of which will provide the \$12.55 million match required to construct the TIGER II transportation program.

The Westport Waterfront TOD will have a catalytic effect on the region's economy and connect disadvantaged Marylanders to jobs, amenities and opportunities. The goal of connecting underserved populations with job opportunities through mass transportation will be accomplished while at the same time creating a model for sustainable development that reverses the environmental degradation of the Chesapeake Bay. The Westport Waterfront TOD project not only meets the TIGER II program goals but embodies USDOT's vision for creating sustainable and livable communities that will make America economically competitive now and for the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Brodie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jay Brodie, President